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THE IMPACT OF THE WAR ON THE INTAKE
OF THE FAMILY DEPARTMENT OF THE
CATHOLIC CHARITABLE BUREAU OF BOSTON

A Thesis

Submitted by

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(A.B., Emmanuel College, 1936)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The impact of the war upon this nation as a whole seems well summarized in the following statements by William Haber:

We are beginning to realize that total war means just exactly what the word 'total' says. It will bring its weight to bear upon every man and woman, every boy and girl. Substantial adjustments in our ways of working and in our ways of living, in the place of employment, in methods of hiring, in the role of women in our society, in the role of youth, and in family relationships are inevitable.

Looking back to Pearl Harbor, we can see that a great deal has happened. We have put 7,000,000 people into the armed forces of the United States. Think what that means. We have taken from the communities, from the schools, from the farms, from the factories, 7,000,000 men. We have put 11,000,000 additional men and women into war industry. We are aiming to provide 20,000,000 workers for war industry, to provide nearly 11,000,000 men for the armed forces, and to provide 9,000,000 workers for agriculture, plus an additional 3,000,000 at the peak of the harvest. Finally, we have pledged to provide some 23,500,000 men and women to maintain our normal economy.

In our great aircraft plants on the Pacific coast, I have seen in plant after plant that about 45 per cent of the personnel are women. I have seen shipyard after shipyard, which employed women on production jobs only to an infinitesimal degree in the last war, with 10 and 15 per cent of their workers women. The program is for 30 per cent of the employees of the coastal shipyard industry to be women.

It is difficult to refer to unemployment as a great national asset, yet that is exactly what it was when Pearl Harbor was upon us. We had seven or eight million unemployed, and, in retrospect, that was a



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great national asset. Now we have reduced unemployment to the irreducible minimum, 1,000,000 people.¹

The war has brought great national problems as a result of the spectacular changes indicated by Mr. Haber. Some of the effects of the war situation upon family life are universal and within the average person's capacity to tolerate. Everyone is faced with the frustrations and irritations of food shortages, higher living costs, priorities, rationing and increased taxes. Many are adjusting, perhaps with a little grumbling, to the anomalous situation of more money but less to buy and to the teasing conflict between the desire to "play fair" and the competitive urge to get as much or better meat than the woman next door. Whether one is a wage earner or homemaker, or both, new problems of planning must be tackled. Such problems are manageable in proportion to the total resources of a family, as for example, the adequacy of the income, the intelligence and ingenuity of the housewife, the readiness of the entire family group to be flexible and adjustable, and so forth. Where income is inadequate or marginal, rising prices may mean inability to purchase food and an actual fear of being hungry. When the mother of a family is mentally dull or confused, she will need more help than can be found in the newspaper or in other mass instruction if

1. William Haber, "The Mobilization of Manpower," Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work: pp. 15-17, 1943.

she is to find her way through the mazes of point rationing. If the members of a family have previously known severe deprivation, materially or emotionally, they will react with anxiety² to the present shortages and limitations.

Such adjustments are relatively minor ones in comparison with others that confront the nation's families. The family is a unit that has deep and lasting value to all its members. When the family balance, whether healthy, precarious, or faulty, is disturbed, the effects are observable and must be reckoned with if a new integration is to be achieved. This balance is frequently sadly disturbed in this war era when men leave their families for the service or for defense jobs in distant cities, when mothers turn from homemaking to outside work, when seventeen year old boys and girls earn abnormally high wages, when young sons are inducted into the service, and when children are cared for by housekeepers or spend their days in nursery schools.

Family problems are not essentially different because of the war but many families must seek the assistance of a social agency because of accentuated difficulties created by the war. It is obvious to all of us that during the past three years the economic picture has changed radically in this country.

2. Eleanor Clifton, "Some Psychological Effects of the War as Seen by the Social Worker," Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work: 1943, p. 117.



We have gone from the depression period into an era of plenty for many. But even though the unemployment figures have been greatly decreased and wages higher, new economic problems face American life. We have the problem today of many families who are receiving more money than they ever had or have had for a long period of years. The wage earner who struggled through the depression may now be earning a high wage. Unfortunately, during the depression period, the social worker often did not consider the value of teaching these persons how to handle money. In fact, by the methods of relief in kind, inadequate budgets, and meeting the bare necessities dependency and irresponsibility were fostered. Thus the client of yesterday is reacting strongly against these deprivations and is spending his earnings as fast as he receives them. One finds he is still following the pattern of extended credit and much of his money goes for amusement, heavy spending on clothing and furniture, etc., and his financial status and security are unsettled as they ever were.³

On the other hand, practically every community has experienced problems resulting from the increased costs of living. Not all family budgets have been affected by the alleged high wages of the defense worker, and the income from the non-defense but essential jobs has not increased in proportion to

3. Dorothy L. Book, "Economic Problems of Tomorrow and Their Effect on Family Life." (Paper read before the New England Conference of Catholic Charities, Boston, February, 1943.)

the cost of living.

Due to expanding employment, it is found that as a general picture there is less demand for financial relief but there are the same problems of marital difficulties, illness, financial strain, behavior problems of adults and children complicated by increased anxiety, tension, fear, inability to manage, family separation, inadequate housing facilities, induction into armed services, and the need for care of children of mothers who are working in industrial plants. Practically every community is struggling with the problems dependent on the mother seeking work outside of the home.

According to Eleanor Clifton:

The social worker has always been in a particularly advantageous position to observe what is happening to the individual in mass situations. During the depression when people suffered by the thousands and mass methods for immediate financial help had to be employed, social workers held firm to their conviction that the victims of the disaster must also be individualized and given the understanding and help that their particular needs indicated. Now that another and a much graver crisis is facing our citizens, social workers are again doing their part.⁴

The purpose of this particular thesis is to study the changing trends in intake in the family department in one specific family case work agency as a direct result of this country's participation in World War II. Its scope is natu-

4. Eleanor Clifton, "Some Psychological Effects of the War as Seen by the Social Worker," Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work: 1943, p. 116.

rally very limited and, because of this, the results inconclusive. However, it is hoped that it will provide a sufficient basis for study and that it will succeed in indicating present trends.

The study is confined to a simple descriptive and comparative analysis of the intake trends in the Family Department of the Catholic Charitable Bureau. Time does not permit the inclusion of treatment, since it is the author's intention merely to indicate the impact of war on the American family as seen in a family agency, and not to delve into the agency's manner of meeting the crisis.

The United States, for approximately one year previous to the attack on Pearl Harbor and its declaration of war in December of 1941, was sending aid to France and England in the form of war materials. This was the beginning of the war industry expansion and the mobilization of manpower. Coincidental with this, an intensive one year military training program was inaugurated for the defense of the country, and men began to leave their homes. For the purpose of this thesis, these are important factors and mark the beginning of all "War conditions." Therefore, the years selected as the basis for this comparative study are 1940, the pre-war year, and 1943 and 1944, mid-war years. The entire nation has felt the effects of this war, but for the purpose of this study, attention will be confined to one agency, the Catholic Charitable Bureau of Boston, and

to one department in that agency, the Family Department.

It is the author's plan to preface this study with a summary of the background history of the Family Department of the Catholic Charitable Bureau. A chapter will then be devoted to a statistical comparison of the years 1940 and 1943 in order to present an over-all picture of the effect of the war upon the agency's intake. Then, for a more specific comparison of the actual effects of the war upon family life, the author has made a comparative study between the first fifty cases at intake in 1940 and the first fifty in 1944. It was felt that this use of 1944 cases would serve to give an up-to-date picture of agency's role in these times of stress, and to demonstrate its adaptability and usefulness as a community resource. Case illustrations are introduced thereafter in order to substantiate the author's allegations.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHARITABLE BUREAU

Because of the dynamic aspects of social work, which is continually subjected to and played upon by the varying social forces in the community, the Catholic Charitable Bureau has constantly been called upon to readapt its program to meet changing conditions. Its policies have been based upon a study of social problems in the light of changing social conditions. In the development of its services to needy families, the agency has given practical evidence that its function is flexible enough to meet the challenge of the exigencies of the times. A brief resume of the history of the agency introduced herewith should serve to carry out this point, demonstrating how the work has continuously changed in accordance with the immediate needs expressed by the community.¹

The history of the Catholic Charitable Bureau in the Archdiocese of Boston goes back forty-one years to its formal opening in the Colonial Building at 100 Boylston Street on January 1, 1903. Prior to this time, however, the Catholic priests and laity in concerted effort volunteered their services in the interest of Catholic children placed

1. Nancy P. Hewitt, "The Catholic Charitable Bureau of Boston in Retrospect," 1940.

out to board by the City and State. They brought pressure to bear so that today there is a very definite and necessary policy of placing children in accordance with the religious belief of their parents. This service was started by Archbishop Williams in 1901 when he asked the priests of the Diocese to furnish the State Board of Charities with a list of suitable Catholic homes to enable the Board to place these Catholic children in Catholic foster homes.²

The Catholic Charitable Bureau continued with this primary purpose until 1906, when it expanded its program, recognizing the problem of the unmarried mother and her baby. In 1874, Saint Mary's Infant Asylum was founded as a Foundling Hospital. In 1893 it became an Infant and Maternity home in addition to being a hospital.³ Due to its financial burden and overcrowded condition, the hospital was unable to take up the work of the placing out of infants in families. It, therefore, turned to the Catholic Charitable Bureau of Boston for assistance. However, the Bureau was unable wholly to care for these infants because of the lack of funds and proper staff to investigate the cases and to make placements. Therefore, the Director of the Catholic Charitable Bureau, Reverend Joseph G. Anderson, gathered together a

2. Annual Report of the Catholic Charitable Bureau, 1902.

3. First Annual Report of the Executive Board of St. Mary's Lying-In Hospital, 1893.

group of prominent Catholic ladies to put this problem before them. As a result of this appeal, the Guild of the Infant Saviour was founded in November of 1906 to meet the expanding needs of St. Mary's.⁴ It became the nucleus of what is known now as the Infant and Maternity Department of the Catholic Charitable Bureau. The Guild of the Infant Saviour continues today, however, with a membership of two thousand Catholic women, as a financial supporting organization of this department.

In 1912 the Catholic Charitable Bureau started a movement for the protection and correction of delinquent Catholic youths throughout the Diocese. The result of the program was that the Juvenile session of every municipal court was covered by a Catholic worker in the interest of Catholic youths coming before the tribunal of justice. This plan continues today.

With the widening of its community contacts and the extension of its services to children the Catholic Charitable Bureau became aware of the need for providing summer vacations for underprivileged youngsters. Therefore, in 1914 there was started a program of outings for sickly children which today is carried on at the Vacation House at Sunset Point, Hull.

4. Descriptive Circular of the Guild of the Infant Saviour, 1906.

It is interesting to note that in 1913 the Directors of the Bureau, in recognizing this vast field of social work and the need for training for this field, started an evening course at Boston College High School on social problems. This course was discontinued after twenty-five years of fruitful educational effort to the many workers in public and private social work who were unable to take more intensive and full time educational programs.

The Bureau has ever been cognizant of changing conditions which affect its people. After the first World War it recognized the economic needs of families and therefore, in 1919, instituted a program of clothing and relief-giving.⁵ With this program the Catholic Charitable Bureau gave the first indication of its awareness of a need for family welfare services. The high cost of living following the World War made it practically impossible for many wage earners to do more than provide shelter and food for their families on their limited incomes. Prior to this period the Bureau had referred appeals for assistance in obtaining food, fuel or clothing to the Overseers of the Poor, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, or to other parochial charitable groups, as the agency felt unable to undertake family relief work because of its limited funds. The increasing demands for

5. Annual Report of the Catholic Charitable Bureau, 1919.

necessary clothing for school children could not be overlooked at this time, however, and the problem was met by appeals for donations of clothing and the formation of Catholic Women's Sewing Clubs. The main emphasis of the family welfare services of the Catholic Charitable Bureau continued as the provision of clothing to needy families until the establishment of the district offices in 1926-1930.

In 1920 when people from Ireland, Italy, Germany and other foreign nations were coming to our shores in large numbers, there was started an Immigrant Welfare Program which continued until the present world conflict curtailed immigration.⁶ Workers from the agency met the newcomers from Europe, helped the immigrants, arranged living accommodations, and oftentimes arranged marriages. The Catherine Moore House in the North End of Boston was founded specifically for the social and educational purposes of these newcomers.

Many of these immigrants settled in the congested areas of the city, and many of these families continued to call upon the Catholic Charitable Bureau for advice in their difficulties of adjustment. The provision of a district office would greatly facilitate the work of the Bureau and

6. Annual Report of the Catholic Charitable Bureau, 1921.

assist in providing a more effective service to these families. When facilities for the establishment of district offices were made available by the building of Health Units through the George Robert White Fund, the Bureau extended its family welfare services to include a service program to families in congested districts who needed advice in the adjustment of family problems.

The readaptation of the services of the Family Welfare Department in 1930 gives further evidence that prevailing conditions have always been a factor in determining the type of service to be rendered by the Catholic Charitable Bureau. Prior to the depression of 1929, the agency had not undertaken family relief work but, because at this time heads of thousands of families throughout the Diocese were suddenly thrown out of work and there seemed no hope of immediate employment for them, the needs of these families became an all-pressing problem. In order to provide for the material needs of the vast army of the temporarily unemployed, the Catholic Charitable Bureau developed as a relief agency in 1930.⁷

The fact that the Bureau represents the Church reaching out to help its members in their daily struggles naturally prompts great numbers to appeal to it for advice and assistance. Being equipped to know the resources of the community,

7. Annual Report of the Catholic Charitable Bureau, 1930.

it serves as a ready information center for thousands of people who would not otherwise have to turn for direction in social, religious, and economic problems.

As the community became acquainted with the Bureau's work, more and more applications were made in behalf of wholly or partially dependent old people. These applications increased to such an extent during the first few years of the agency's existence that it was deemed wise to consider such cases apart from the agency's general work. As public assistance to the aged poor in their own homes was scanty in Massachusetts until the enactment of the Old Age Assistance law in 1931, the Bureau could not escape the assumption of its responsibility to assist old people in their own homes. Therefore, there came into existence, as a part of the work of the Family Department, what is known as the Old Folks' Fund.

Even today there are innumerable elderly, destitute people who are not eligible for the benefits of the Old Age Assistance program of the Social Security Act. Hence, the Old Folks' Fund of the Bureau, in its effort to give a little bit more comfort to the aged, still renders a very effective service.

The Children's Department has become one of the major works of the Bureau. Its program of supervising children in their own homes, placing them out in families when necessary, taking care of the problem boy or girl and saving them

from the toils of the law as well as caring for the sickly and undernourished, all are in full content of the Bureau's child care service. The Bureau is the largest private child placing agency in New England.

The Infant and Maternity Department of the Bureau has been the point of intake for all admissions to St. Mary's Hospital since 1932. The treatment of the problem of the unmarried mother has been considered a particularly important one in view of its far reaching consequences.

The work of the Catholic Charitable Bureau has always progressed with the times, expanding its program and adapting its policies in accordance with the needs of the community. Any notable changes taking place in the family life have always been and are now being reflected in the families known to the agency.

CHAPTER III

STATISTICAL COMPARISON OF INTAKE IN 1940 and 1943

A statistical comparison of the trends in intake for the years 1940 and 1943 will be incorporated into the present chapter in order to give perspective to this study of the war's impact upon this family agency.

Helen R. Jeter in her article entitled "Wartime Problems of Family Security" makes mention of the fact that "from 1933 to 1940 unemployment was probably the most important problem in family agencies."¹ Correspondingly, therefore, the public relief categories were heavily burdened, and private agency intake was high.

"The year 1940, from the point of view of private welfare service, was a repetition in substance of previous years since the depression,"² according to the Annual Report of the Catholic Charitable Bureau for that year. The volume of intake was heavy in the Family Department, with a total of 5650 applications for service being made of the agency. Of these applications, 4240 were made cases, and 1410 were not made cases.

In contrast, 1943's total applications numbered 2598, with 2148 of them being accepted for case work consideration

1. Helen R. Jeter, "Wartime Problems of Family Security," The Family, 1942, p. 83.

2. Annual Report of the Catholic Charitable Bureau, 1940.

and 450 not made cases. At this rate, there was a decrease of 47 per cent in applications made to the agency in 1943 in comparison with applications made during an equal period three years earlier, when this country was entering "the second decade of the tragic era that we have come to call 'the depression.'³"

When one breaks the agency intake down further for the purpose of comparison, it is learned that during the year 1940 new cases totaled 2081, with 636 of that number being considered for intensive case work service, and 1445 being given brief service. Recurring cases, that is cases which had been known to the agency previous to 1940, but which came back during that year, numbered 1631 in all. Of these, 707 were given major case work consideration, and 924 brief service. Therefore, the agency's total intake during the year 1940 was 3712, of which number 64 per cent were given brief service consideration, and only 36 per cent were taken under care.

Three years later, in 1943, when unemployment was no longer a national problem and all-out defense had become a by-word, it was found that intake had decreased substantially in both public and private agencies. The total intake for the

3. Edith Abbott, "Relief, the No Man's Land, and How to Reclaim It," Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work: 1940, p. 187.

Family Department of the Catholic Charitable Bureau for the entire year was 1763, a figure markedly in contrast with the above mentioned 3712 cases for 1940. Cases never previously known to the agency and accepted on an intensive case work basis numbered 557, and the new cases given brief service totaled 398.

Recurring cases amounted to 808, with 561 of that number being placed under care, and 247 given brief service. At this rate, with an annual total intake of 1763, 63 per cent of the cases were accepted for intensive case work service, and correspondingly, 37 per cent were given brief service consideration. This shows a definite trend toward lowered intake, but at the same time a trend toward more intensive service on a far greater majority of those cases coming to the attention of the agency.

It should be noted here that the discrepancy between the total application figure and the total intake figure may be accounted for by the fact that the application figure contains repetition of applications made to the agency during the same year by the same families.

The impact of the war with its accompanying defense work boom, can readily be seen in the marked decrease in intake in 1943. The changing trends in public relief supplementation during the two years under consideration are likewise indicative. During 1940, Overseers of the Public Welfare cases aided

by the agency averaged 278 a month, and Works Progress Administration cases averaged 142 a month. In 1943, the monthly average of Public Welfare cases aided was 163, representing a decrease of 59 per cent. As for Works Progress Administration supplementation during 1943, it must be remembered that this branch of public relief was discontinued by June of 1943. The monthly average for the first five months of 1943, however, amounted to only three cases per month. In other words, the number of W.P.A. cases supplemented during the first part of 1943 was negligible.

The per month average supplementation of Public Welfare cases in 1940 was \$1336.90, and of Works Progress Administration, \$634.58. In 1943, the average monthly supplementation of Public Welfare cases was \$1553.59, and of W.P.A. cases, \$33.26. This increase in the average amount given per month in supplementation of Public Welfare cases in 1943 over 1940, in spite of the decrease in the number of cases aided, is no paradox in a period of declining unemployment, but is a reflection of the rise in living costs in a war time economy.

During the year 1940 it is found that 3198 families and individuals received relief and service from the Family Department of the Catholic Charitable Bureau, while in 1943, 1433 families and individuals were similarly assisted. This sharp decrease in relief and service administered by the agency is indicative of the increased financial security in general of the times.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYTICAL STUDY OF INTAKE TRENDS IN THE FAMILY DEPARTMENT OF THE CATHOLIC CHARITABLE BUREAU DURING 1940 and 1944

In order to make specific comparisons of trends in intake as a result of the present world conflict, the author has critically examined the first fifty cases coming to the intake desk of the Family Department of the Catholic Charitable Bureau in 1940 and the first fifty in 1944. Cases have been selected in order of their application and have been compared as of their intake status, so that often times all the factors looked for in each case have not been present. Treatment has not been taken under consideration. By cases considered from intake author means that they are being examined from the point of view of "the first interview client has with case worker in which client describes the situation and requests help, and the worker and client together determine whether the agency can give the service the client seeks."¹

In examining the cases from an economic standpoint² it was found that 36 per cent of the first fifty families referred to the agency in 1940 were handicapped by inadequate incomes,

1. Leroy M.A. Maeder, "Generic Aspects of the Intake Interview," The Family, 23:14, March, 1942.

2. Table I - Appendix

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Original Articles

THE PROBLEM OF THE PHYSICIAN IN THE PRESENT DAY
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while in 1944, only nineteen or 38 per cent were unable to meet their needs financially. Two of 1940's fifty cases, or 4 per cent, had adequate incomes, while in 1944, sixteen of the families, or 32 per cent, were adequately provided for financially.

The remaining 10 per cent not yet accounted for in 1940 came to the agency's attention because they were temporarily without income of any sort for the following reasons: in one case, father's illness caused a brief absence from his job in private industry; in two cases families were awaiting acceptance by the Department of Aid to Dependent Children; in the fourth instance aid from the Overseers of Public Welfare was pending; and in the fifth situation family was awaiting Unemployment Compensation.

In 1944 it was found that fifteen of the families, that is 30 per cent, were temporarily without income, and for a variety of reasons. Three families were awaiting a Government allotment from drafted fathers; three fathers had deserted their families, leaving them without support; four applications were resulting from the illness of the wage earner; two men sought the agency's assistance immediately upon their discharge from the armed services; one application resulted from a defense plant lay-off; another client approached the agency for aid pending acceptance of application to the Overseers of Public Welfare; and one young man requested temporary assistance upon his dis-



charge from the hospital pending his return to work, since his parents Old Age Assistance allowance would not be sufficient to provide for him even temporarily. This matter of a substantial increase in the number of families temporarily without income of any sort would appear to be a reflection of the uncertainty of war times.

The question of the adequacy or inadequacy of income³ naturally has a direct relation to the source of income, and this particular item as seen in the present case comparison study is most significant. In 1940, it was found that 40 per cent of the families were dependent for their income upon private industry, while fifty per cent were supported by public relief agencies, including Overseers of the Public Welfare, Works Progress Administration, and Aid to Dependent Children, and 10 per cent were without income, as previously mentioned. Of the twenty wage earners employed in private industry, only two were receiving wages sufficiently large to meet their families' needs.

In contrast to this picture, one finds in 1944 that 50 per cent of those requesting agency's assistance were employed in private industry, and of these twenty-five wage earners, twelve were receiving adequate incomes. In other words, 24 per cent of those seeking assistance were independent fi-

3. Table II - Appendix

nancially, yet were desirous of the service offered by the agency. Of the remaining twenty-five applicants, it must be kept in mind that fifteen were temporarily without income; five were dependent upon government allotments, and five upon public relief, including Overseers of the Public Welfare, Aid to Dependent Children and Old Age Assistance. One of the government allotment group also had an income from private industry, and one from the public relief group also had an income from Soldiers' Relief.

One hears frequent reference made to the fact that social agencies are growing away from their former function as dispensers of relief, and are becoming more and more useful as service organizations. ⁴ Such a contention is clearly carried out by the study. In 1940, 50 per cent of the first fifty cases at intake were requesting relief only, that is the request was for a specified amount of relief for a specific need, and agency was not called upon originally for any accompanying service. This point will be elaborated upon later through a case illustration. In contrast to this, but 14 per cent of 1944's cases at intake were for relief and only relief. Naturally, in either of these groups, consideration of the case undoubtedly involved varying amounts of service depending upon the need, but at intake in these instances only relief was requested.

In 1940, it was found that in only two of the fifty cases, that is 4 per cent of them, were service and advice only requested of the agency; whereas in 1944, sixteen of the cases, or 32 per cent of them found that they were in need of the agency only as a resource for service.

In 1940, 40 per cent of the cases at intake were seeking both relief and service and advice, while in 1944, an increased number, 54 per cent, approached the agency for relief and service. In other words, there has been an increasing use of this community resource as an instrument of service, while its use as a relief organ has been sharply decreased. This would seem to indicate that in spite of rising incomes and increased financial independence of war times the social agency is proving its usefulness to those who must seek help outside their own resources. It is interesting to note that five private industry cases where income was adequate found it necessary to approach the agency on a service basis only. In the words of Helen Jeter: "It is probable that the war will bring many families that have never needed relief into situations in which they are powerless to act alone and in which services are important."⁵

Although too much significance cannot be placed upon the housing of clients as a ground for comparison in this particular

5. Helen Jeter; "Wartime Problems of Family Security," The Family, 23:91, May, 1942.

⁶ study, it does seem rather significant that in 1940, one finds sixteen of the families approaching the agency or 32 per cent were inadequately housed, and nine or 18 per cent were living in suitable quarters. In 1944, by contrast, we find that ten families, or 20 per cent, were inadequately housed, and twenty-eight, or 56 per cent, were comfortably housed. In the remaining cases for both years, the question of housing did not enter the situation at intake. This trend would seem to indicate that the higher standard families are now tending to seek the agency's assistance.

A remarkable parallel presents itself in the comparison of health needs⁷ existing in cases coming to the Catholic Charitable Bureau, and very often causing families to seek out the agency's assistance, thereby demonstrating the value of the family agency as a resource for meeting health needs. In 1940, 60 per cent of the fifty cases at intake presented health problems, while in 1944, 62 per cent contained a medical need of some kind.

It may or may not be significant that in 1940, 4 per cent of the cases presented mental problems while in 1944, 16 per cent were complicated by this element, and three of the cases were directly traceable to the war.

6. Table IV - Appendix

7. Table V - Appendix

In these comparisons already drawn economic and health factor, specific elements, have been outlined. Now we shall discuss the less definite factors, that is the emotional content of the cases.⁸ In 1940, it was found that inadequate incomes and economic need were responsible for an exceptionally high intake, and made pressure a very important element to be contended with in a case worker's daily routine. For that reason the emotional factors may or may not have received as much attention at intake in 1940 as in 1944. However, that might be, a study of the initial cases in 1940 and 1944 reveals that the factors of broken homes, emotional conflict, legal entanglements and marital problems are decidedly more apparent in the latter year. Whether the war, with its accompanying uncertainties and unsettling conditions, is responsible is a matter of conjecture; but it would seem likely that the restlessness of the times is making itself felt.

In 1940, broken homes were complicating factors in 3 per cent of the cases, while in 1944, 36 per cent of the cases had this complication. The four homes in 1940 were disrupted for the following reasons: one because of the father's removal from the home to a hospital for the chronically ill; another through court action terminating in legal separation of the parents; the third because of the father's commitment to jail; and the fourth because of the father's desertion.

8. Table VI - Appendix

In 1944, the eighteen instances of broken homes fall into several categories; eight cases in which father's desertion was causative factor; two cases in which legal separations were responsible for the break up of the homes; one case where the incarceration of the father caused the wife and children to return to the home of the maternal parents; two cases in which wage earner was drafted, in one instance causing woman to seek placement of children so that she might obtain employment, and in the second instance causing elderly mother to become so disturbed emotionally and mentally that hospitalization was necessary; one case where father was killed in the Service obliging mother to ask for placement of children in order that she might seek employment; one case where death of mother and illness of father caused application to agency for arrangements for the care of the children; one case where illness of mother meant that home had to be broken up; and two instances where father enlisted in the service as a result of marital discord. The war, with its far reaching repercussions, has obviously played a most important part in the break up of several of these homes.

Emotional conflicts, defined by G.A. Hamilton as "distinct conflicts within the personality between two or more opposing impulses or desires which tend to irresolution, tension or neurotic behavior," were strikingly apparent in 54 per cent of the 1944 cases in contrast to the presence of this factor in

9

16 per cent of the 1940 cases. Undoubtedly there is some degree of feeling and conflict in the majority of the cases coming to a social agency's attention, as expressed in this way by one author: "All have come because they see no immediate possibility of meeting their problems unassisted. For some relief is an accustomed interlude between their regular jobs; to others agency application means the final admission of defeat; and to others relief or worthwhile advice and service spell comparative security after weeks of uncertainty."¹⁰

However, only those cases where intake interview speaks of emotional disturbance in some degree are considered in these percentages.

Frequently emotional conflicts accompanied marital problems. It was found, too, that considerable emotional disturbance was occasioned by the drafting of family members. It is interesting to observe that in eight cases where emotional disturbances were noted in 1940, four were also situations wherein marital conflict existed. The conflicts accompanied by emotion in the four other cases apparently resulted from various sources: from financial stress in ordinarily high standard families in two instances, where approach to a social agency was particu-

9. Leland E. Hinkle, M.D., and Jacob Shatzky, Ph.D., editors, Psychiatric Dictionary.

10. Rosemary Reynolds, "Do We Still Believe Case Work is Needed in a Public Relief Agency?" Intake in Public and Private Agencies, p. 171

larly painful; from a religious conflict in one case; and from the incarceration of father in the fourth case.

In 1944 the emotional upsets arose from a wide variety of causes, including marital conflict. As a matter of fact, thirteen of the twenty-seven cases were activated by a combination of both elements, emotional and marital. In four cases the emotional conflict apparently arose from the drafting of an important family member; in four instances physical illness caused the emotional upheaval, and in one case a mental disturbance was the causative factor; in another case a legal entanglement was responsible for considerable conflict; the break-up of a home complicated another situation, causing considerable emotional stress; overcrowded housing was responsible in another situation; discharge from the Service brought emotional repercussions to one ex-service man, the head of a family; and strong feelings about having to seek outside assistance in time of need gave rise to an emotional conflict in yet another case.

Legal entanglements existed in four of 1940's cases. Three of these situations were due to marital discord, and one to financial stress. In 1944 an increased number of legal entanglements came to the agency's attention. Ten of the cases complicated by legal matters were the result of unhappy marital situations, and two were concerned with financial difficulties.

Although the presence of marital difficulty has already been mentioned as a frequent complicating factor, it might be well to mention the increase in marital problems from nine out of fifty in 1940, or 18 per cent, to twenty-two out of fifty, or 44 per cent in 1944.

In 1940 there were no cases among the first fifty wherein the mother was employed, but in 1944 the fact that eleven mothers were working brought complications, and necessitated the contacting of the Catholic Charitable Bureau in working out their problems.

Twelve cases came to the agency's attention because of the drafting of a family wage earner, thereby giving rise to problems, emotional or financial. The discharge of six fathers brought repercussions demanding the service of the agency.

After this lengthy discussion of trends and significant factors, it seems an opportune time to introduce some actual intake situations to illustrate the foregoing statements, and to present typical 1940 and 1944 cases for comparative purposes. The following chapter will be devoted to such illustrations.

CHAPTER V

CASE ILLUSTRATIONS

The introduction of case material in this chapter should serve to illustrate statements previously made in regard to intake trends and the war's impact upon family life as seen through the Family Department of the Catholic Charitable Bureau. Cases have been selected at random from the first fifty coming to the agency in 1940 and the first fifty in 1944, and are presented as of their intake status.

The case of Mr. F. might be designated a "typical 1940 case" in that it is representative of many cases of similar type seeking the assistance of the agency during the depression era. On January 10 Mr. F. called at the office to request temporary financial assistance. Client had missed four days from work on a Works Progress Administration Project because he had been ill with a cold. Four of his six children were at home with colds and another of the youngsters had been a patient at the Boston City Hospital since early November with an abdominal abscess. Because he feared eviction if his rent was allowed to lapse, client had used \$20.00 of his last check received on January 2 for rent. Total check for two weeks amounted to \$58.00. At the time of application he was requesting money for food to carry him over until he received his next check on January 17. Mention was made of the fact

that his next check would necessarily be short because of his absence from work. Mr. F. had made several similar requests of the agency in the course of 1939, since his WPA earnings had never been sufficient to meet the needs of a family consisting of eight members, and, too, since changes in assignments and pay days had been fairly frequent.

At intake this case offers primarily the problems of unemployment, irregular and insufficient income, plus the suggestion of the existence of accompanying health needs which might be the result of inadequate diet. No emotional problems are immediately apparent. Request comes from a father who is having a difficult time providing the bare necessities of life.

A second case will serve to characterize a type frequently coming to the attention of the agency during 1940. Case of M. family was referred to the office on January 5 by Welfare visitor for agency's assistance in providing father with dentures. It was felt that they were essential if he was to obtain work in private industry.

Intake interview held at client's home revealed that family had excellent standards and comfortable living quarters. Family consisted of mother, father, and four children whose ages ranged from nineteen years to seven years. Worker learned that Mr. M. had been employed for many years in a supervisory capacity at a Boston Life Insurance Company. He lost this position when he was forced to stay out of work for an extended

period through illness. His age was against him when he endeavored to return. Since his health had improved he had held various types of odd jobs, including work as a short order cook in a summer hotel.

Family at the time of their referral to the agency were being supported mainly by the eldest girl's earnings as a typist at City Hall. She averaged \$15.00 a week, and turned \$9.00 of this amount over to her parents. The Overseers of the Public Welfare supplemented this contribution with \$4.20 weekly, bringing the total income up to the maximum Welfare budget of \$13.20 for a family of six persons.

It was learned that Mr. M. had had his teeth extracted at the Boston City Hospital several months previous to this application, and from there was referred to Tufts for dentures. However, Tufts requested that Welfare give a guarantee for payment and referred him back to the Welfare visitor. Welfare visitor, in turn, referred him to the Catholic Charitable Bureau. Client felt confident that he could obtain employment once he was provided with dentures.

During this home call worker learned something of the struggle Mrs. M. had had in adjusting her planning from an adequate income level to the Welfare standards. Concern was expressed over a health problem presented by the eighteen year old daughter, the victim of a serious case of bronchial asthma.

The original request for dentures in this case was com-

plicated by the problems of unemployment, inadequate income, and medical needs, plus this serious adjustment difficulty.

A third 1940 case, included among the first fifty coming to the agency at the outset of the year, concerned the W. family. Initial interview held at the home was occasioned by the request of School Service for clothing for the children of school age.

¹
School Service was a service formulated by the Boston Council of Social Agencies in 1937 whereby teachers could refer instances of need among school children to the Council, whence the case could be referred to the proper agency. The Service was set up by the Council on a five year plan to increase the understanding between schools and social agencies, and to serve as a central referral agency for schools until they became acquainted with the social agencies that could best handle the problems coming to the attention of teachers. At the end of June, 1942, the Service was discontinued.

There were eight members in this family, parents and six children ranging from eleven years to fourteen months. Another child was expected in the Spring. Home was poorly situated and inadequate. Father was employed as a parking space attendant earning \$18.00 a week. Until 1932 he had earned a good salary as a truck driver, but during that year he had been laid off and he had not been successful in obtaining steady work with

1. Boston Council of Social Agencies, Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Boston Council of Social Agencies, p. 10.

an adequate salary since.

Intake interview revealed that inadequate income was preventing parents from providing their children with the minimum essentials. No health or emotional problems were immediately apparent, and worker even mentioned in recording the seeming congeniality of family members in spite of the financial strain.

Maintenance needs were a primary concern to both client and worker in 1940. Unemployment was the outstanding problem, and the outstanding need in the cases studied was relief and assistance in providing the basic necessities. The cases just cited serve to illustrate these conclusions.

If, in 1944, there existed health problems similar to those seen in the first two cases just mentioned, they probably would not have had such an acute effect upon the life of the entire family. Employment would not offer any particular problem in view of the abundance of work opportunities, earnings would be more adequate, and, as in Mr. M's situation, even the matter of dentures or age would not be too serious an impediment in the seeking of a job. Absence of four days from work on the part of the wage earner, as in the F. case, would not currently cause a family crisis, since war time wages are not only adequate but often excessive, thereby permitting budgeting and planning that were an impossibility on the always unsatisfactory WPA and OPW incomes,

and on the frequently insufficient private industries earnings. In other words, brief illnesses on the part of the wage earner would not be as serious in 1944 as in 1940, age requirements and personal appearance are not presently a stumbling block in seeking employment, and the private industry worker in 1944 is able to provide for his family's needs by a virtue of a more adequate week's pay than were the men of Mr. N's category in 1940.

Nineteen hundred and forty-four has been a year of general unrest and uncertainty as a result of the war. One finds cases such as the three following typical of those coming to the agency's attention.

The W. case provides an interesting illustration. Red Cross requests the agency's interest in Mrs. W. whose husband is in the Navy. Woman and her two babies are provided for by his allotment of \$100.00 a month. Intake interview is held in the cheerful kitchen of an apartment which is tastefully and gaily furnished in typical bride fashion. Mrs. W., who is accustomed to managing on her husband's defense industry earnings which average from \$42.00 to \$50.00 a week during the past two years, finds it a constant strain to manage her daily expenses, and is altogether unable to replace her eye-glasses which she broke some weeks ago and to attend to some very essential dental work. It is obvious that she was crying just before worker arrived, and her fear at being alone at

night and of having to face family crises without her husband are evident as she talks. She seems to feel some resentment against her husband who is apparently free from family responsibility, and against her children who are standing between her and employment, and independence.

Here is found financial stress, complicated by deep and disturbing emotional conflict, all directly traceable to the war, and threatening the all-important family security.

The L. case presents a complicated picture at intake. Client calls at the office upon the suggestion of a worker from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. She and her four young children are making their home temporarily with woman's sister-in-law and family. Home is terribly overcrowded, and Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has had several anonymous complaints in regard to unsatisfactory living conditions. The present set-up has come about as the result of a fire by which the L. family were completely burned out. All of their belongings, including their clothing, were burned beyond use. Housing is difficult to get in their particular section of the city, especially for a large family of children.

Mr. L. is serving a long jail sentence for criminal assault on a young girl. His wife is planning to obtain a legal separation. Previous to the fire she was employed in a defense plant, and was getting along well with the help of

a married sister who stayed at home with the children when she worked. However, this sister does not plan to continue to make her home with the L. family after they are reestablished.

At the time of her application to the agency, Mrs. L. was extremely disturbed and confused. She was undecided between placement of her children so that she could continue to work, and reestablishment of her home and application to the Department of Public Welfare, Aid to Dependent Children, for maintenance. She was strongly opposed to giving up her financial independence in this manner, particularly since she had a remunerative job open to her; but, on the other hand, she wondered about the wisdom of placing her youngsters and then putting her entire salary out into boarding homes for them. She was full of resentment against her husband, and displayed considerable antagonism against the neighbors who were further complicating her affairs by their complaints against the behaviour of her children and against the only arrangement for living quarters that she had been able to make. Financial help in this crisis was forthcoming from Mrs. L's fellow-employees, but advice and service were sought of the Catholic Charitable Bureau. Case is obviously one replete with deep emotional conflicts.

This case was selected as typical of the war era although it has no "Service connection," in that it is an indirect reflection of the impact of the war on family life, and it

demonstrates the part that the social agency is playing in 1944, when it is called upon for service and advice when financial assistance is not needed. In 1940 Mrs. L. would undoubtedly have had to seek assistance for her family immediately upon the incarceration of her husband, and for full support ADC would have been the customary solution. She probably would have had no alternative in view of the scarcity of jobs, and regardless of how painful an experience such a step might be. However, in 1944 she has a job open to her, and probably a great number of her fellow workers are mothers. They have been able to make arrangements for day care for their youngsters, and therefore she feels that she should be able to do the same thing, thereby maintaining her independence. She cannot make plans without assistance, and therefore she consults a social agency for help. As in many instances in this wartime era, financial independence does not mean complete independence, and frequently the social agency must render service when family problems arise.

The case of the B. family is one quite typical of the many Service-connected problems coming to the Family Department of the agency. Mr. B. applies to intake worker for advice. He has passed his physical examination previous to induction and has been sworn into the Army, but is home on a four weeks' extension of his leave because of an injury done to his wrist during the interval between induction and

date for reporting to Camp Devens for assignment. He is so disturbed over the problems facing his wife upon his departure that he cannot sleep at night and seems to have lost control over his nerves. Couple have been married ten years, and have two children under school age. Mrs. B. had a nervous breakdown after the birth of her second child. This came as the result of the fact that her two confinements were too close together, and the care of two children so nearly of an age, in her run down condition, was beyond her strength. Client does not see how she will be able to manage without his help. His worries about her health are complicated by his concern over her ability to manage financially on \$100.00 a month after being accustomed to his salary of \$80.00 a week. In spite of his adequate earnings in the past two years, couple have never saved a cent, and have been in the habit of living extravagantly and gaily, spending all his wages on clothes and amusement, and even doing extensive buying on credit.

At the time of his application to the agency, Mr. B. was giving considerable thought to the wisdom of having the children placed before he leaves, so that his wife might be free to establish herself in a room and obtain employment. By carrying out this plan he figures that she can use his allotment for board and room for the children, and her own earnings will meet her own needs. He seeks agency's advice

and help in working out his problem.

This particular case presents all the conflicts, emotional and real, connected with a serious living adjustment.

An interesting parallel can be introduced into this case discussion through coincidence. On January 15, 1940 Mr. K. requested the Catholic Charitable Bureau's assistance in working out confinement plans for his wife. She had been receiving pre-natal care at the out-patient department of a private hospital near her home, and would like to be confined there, but the necessary fee of \$42.00 was beyond their means. Man had been on WPA for the past three months, and prior to this assignment had had temporary odd jobs. Family indebtedness was considerable, and they were in no position to incur further financial obligations. However, Mrs. K. was strongly opposed to a free confinement at the Boston City Hospital because of an unpleasant experience with the hospital in the past.

On February 3, 1944, Mrs. K. consulted the agency in regard to day care for one of her two children. Her husband was employed at the Edison Electric, and she had a job as a press operator at the Hood Rubber Company. Her four year old daughter was attending a day nursery, but her eleven year old son was preparing his own lunch at noon time, and was running around the streets during the afternoons after school until mother arrived home from work.

Worker learned that the present combined incomes of Mr. and Mrs. K. had permitted them to pay off numerous debts of long standing. In addition to this, Mrs. K. was thoroughly enjoying her new independence and the experience of being remuneratively employed. However, she was somewhat concerned over the fact that her son was becoming a behaviour problem, but blamed this upon the fact that there was no provision made in the neighborhood for supervised recreation for school children after school hours. She consulted agency for assistance in making plans for him.

Notice the contrast. In 1940 parents were unable to meet their financial needs unassisted, whereas, in 1944, although independent financially, they still required the services of the agency because they found that they could not meet their reality situation unaided.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

"Every client coming to a relief agency, public or private, brings with him a set of problems, conflicts, and needs,"¹ concludes Eda Houwick in an article originally published in the February, 1933, edition of "The Family." This timeless statement might be applied to persons seeking agency assistance in any era. However, to demonstrate just how these problems, conflicts, and needs have varied in these trying times has been the purpose of this thesis.

An attempt has been made to show that the depression brought financial insecurity with its accompanying physical and emotional hazards. The war, it has been demonstrated, has tended to lessen this financial insecurity, but it has brought with it increased instability and apprehension, thereby creating deeper emotional problems which threaten the cornerstone of society, the family.


The relief function of the agency has been seen to have diminished with the increase of employment opportunities through defense work. On the other hand, there has been a trend toward a larger service program.

1. Eda Houwick, "Treatment in Intake Procedure," Intake in Public and Private Agencies, p. 23.

The agency is responding to the challenge of the times by rendering service to Servicemen and their families, and to those families that have never needed relief or assistance before but are now powerless to act alone.

Changes in intake during the war years were a direct reflection of the rising incomes, increased living costs and family insecurity accompanying the war. The problem of unemployment practically disappeared and the reasons for needing assistance became increasingly complicated ones, rooted in physical, psycho-somatic, or other emotional disturbances.²

The results of this study are indicative, not conclusive. It is hoped that they will serve to picture the far-reaching effects of war upon family life through its effect upon those families known to the Family Department of the Catholic Charitable Bureau.

Approved,

Richard K. Conant, Dean

2. Mary E. Richmond, "The Long View," p. 327.

APPENDIX

TABLE I

NUMERICAL COMPARISON OF ECONOMIC PROBLEMS
II. THE FIRST FIFTY CASES AT INTAKE IN 1940
AND IN THE FIRST FIFTY CASES AT INTAKE IN 1944

	1940	1944
Inadequate Income	43	19
Adequate Income	2	16
Temporarily Without Income	5	15

TABLE II

NUMERICAL COMPARISON OF SOURCES OF INCOME
IN THE FIRST FIFTY CASES AT INTAKE IN 1940
AND IN THE FIRST FIFTY CASES AT INTAKE IN 1944

	1940	1944
Private Industry	20	25
Public Relief	25	5
Government Allotment	0	5
Temporarily Without Income	5	15

TABLE III
NUMERICAL COMPARISON OF RELIEF AND SERVICE
IN THE FIRST FIFTY CASES AT INTAKE IN 1940
AND IN THE FIRST FIFTY CASES AT INTAKE IN 1944

	1940	1944
Relief Only	28	7
Service Only	2	16
Relief and Service	20	27

TABLE IV

NUMERICAL COMPARISON OF ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS
IN THE FIRST FIFTY CASES AT INTAKE IN 1940
AND IN THE FIRST FIFTY CASES AT INTAKE IN 1944

	1940	1944
Inadequate Housing	16	10
Adequate Housing	9	28
Overcrowding	6	8
Undesirable Neighborhood	10	4

TABLE V
NUMERICAL COMPARISON OF HEALTH NEEDS
IN THE FIRST FIFTY CASES AT INTAKE IN 1940
AND IN THE FIRST FIFTY CASES AT INTAKE IN 1944

	1940	1944
Physical	30	31
Neuroses and Psychoses	4	8

TABLE VI

NUMERICAL COMPARISON OF DOMESTIC PROBLEMS
IN THE FIRST FIFTY CASES AT INTAKE IN 1940
AND IN THE FIRST FIFTY CASES AT INTAKE IN 1944

	1940	1944
Broken Homes	4	18
Emotional Conflicts	8	27
Legal Entanglements	4	12
Marital Problems	9	22

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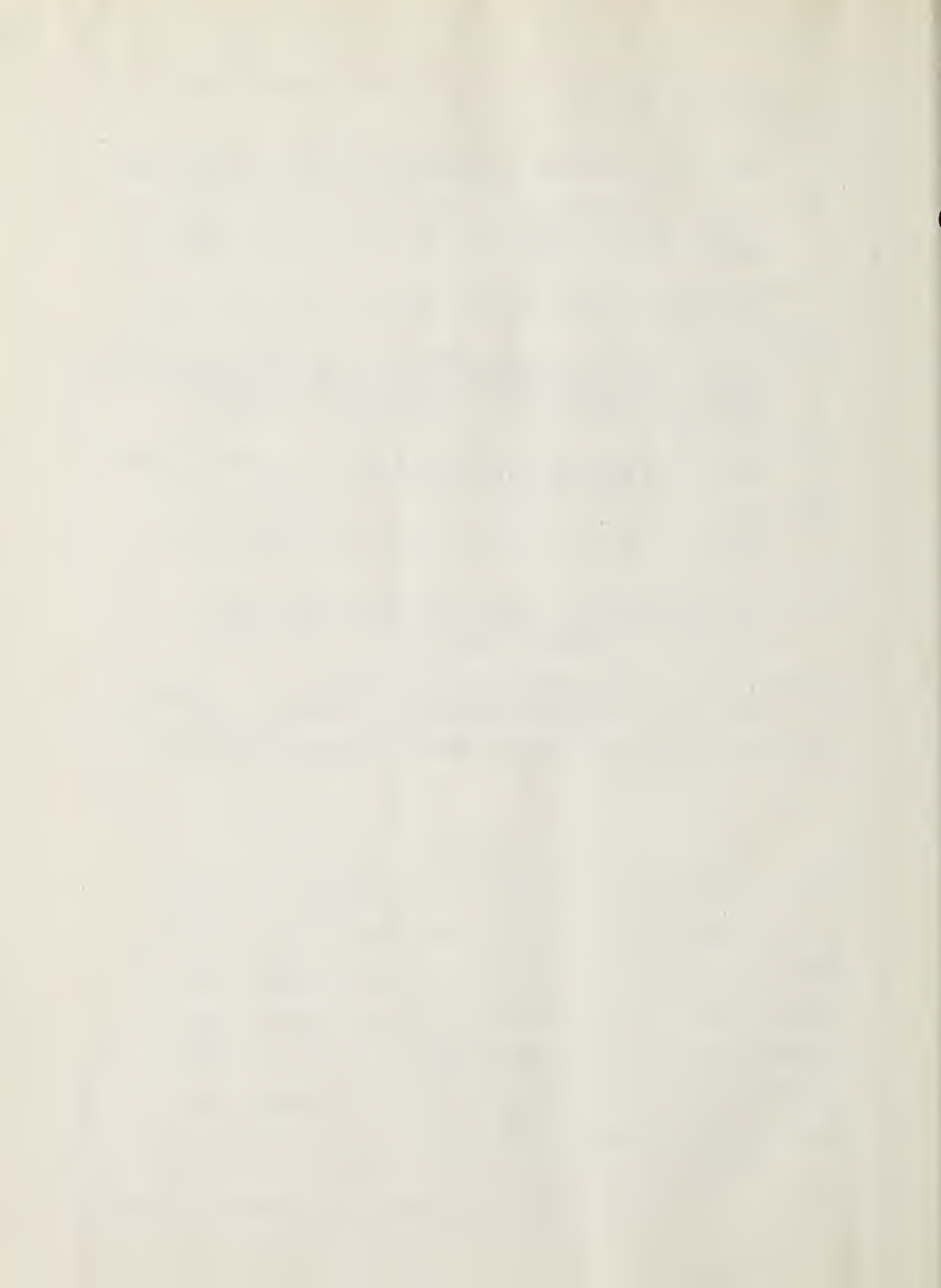
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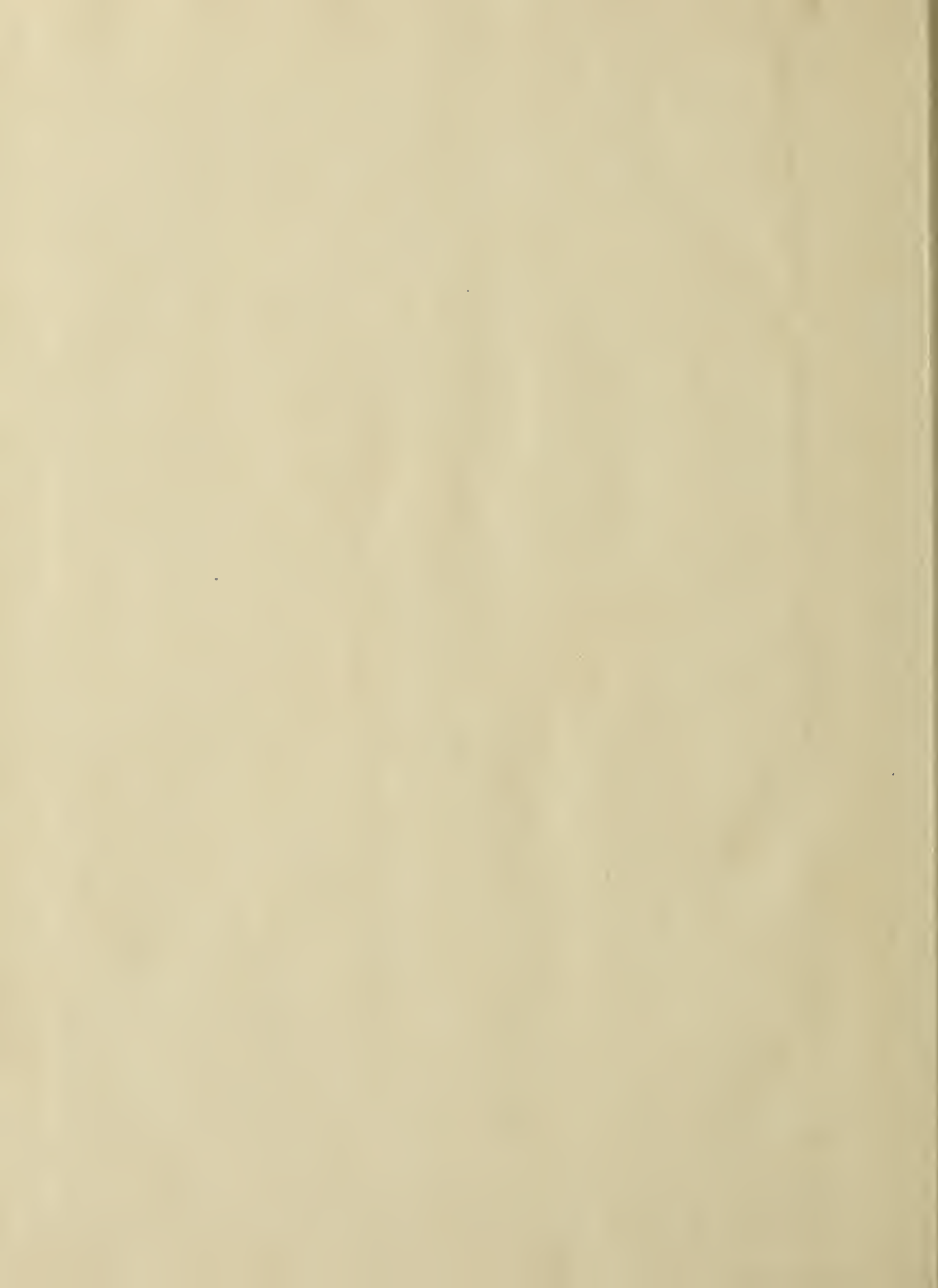
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